

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 AID-05 MCT-01 /068 W

-----170630Z 101835 /12

R 161900Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2111

INFO USSOUTHCOM

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT LOPEZ DEFENDED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S ACHIEVEMENTS AMIDST LIBERAL PARTY SNIPING, INCREASED MANEUVERING IN PRE-PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS, AND THE CONTINUED DISRUPTION OF PUBLIC ORDER, ESPECIALLY BY STUDENTS AND GUERILLAS. THE LOCAL PRESS HAS COMMENTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE NEXT POSSIBLE U.S. AMBASSADOR. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT DEFENDS HIS ADMINISTRATIONS. PRESIDENT LOPEZ DELIVERED A STRONG DEFENSE OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE IN A SPEECH ON JUNE 11. AFTER NOTING CRITICISM FROM UNNAMED SECTORS OF HIS OWN LIBERAL PARTY (PROBABLY SUPPORTERS OF EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS). HE LISTED SOME OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HE EMPHASIZED HIS ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE GAP BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, AND NOTED SUCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS THE CONSTRUCTION OF WATER PURIFICATION PLANTS,  
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THE INCREASE IN ELECTRICAL POWER SUPPLY, THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING, AND THE COLOMBIANIZATION OF FOREIGN-OWNED BANKS. HE ALSO CLAIMED CREDIT FOR DEFENDING COLOMBIA'S SOVERIGNTY OVER ITS ORBITAL SPACE SEGMENT. THE PRESIDENT ENDED WITH THE WISH THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION MIGHT BE REMEMBERED AS A GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD AN INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF ALL THE PEOPLE AND AREAS OF COLOMBIA.

3. BETANCUR'S NON-CANDIDACY GROWS; LIBERALS ENTERTAIN FOURTH CANDIDATE. A LEADING MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S OSPINA-PASTRANA WING, FORMER MINISTER HERNAN JARAMILLO OCAMPO, ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ON A FORMULA TO MAKE BELISARIO BETANCUR THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF A UNITED CONSERVATIVE PARTY. JARAMILLO, WHO IS TO MEET IN EUROPE WITH ALVARO GOMEZ, THE LEADER OF THE PARTY'S PRO-GOVERNMENT WING, TO DISCUSS THIS FORMULA, INDICATED THAT HE HAD BETANCUR'S IMPLICIT ACCEPTANCE OF THE CANDIDACY. MEANWHILE, BETANCUR CONTINUED TO DENY ANY AMBITIONS FOR THE PRESIDENCY, WHILE SEVERAL THOUSAND MEMBERS OF A NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE WOMEN'S GROUP OFFICIALLY ADHERED TO A POSSIBLE BETANCUR CANDIDACY. THE LIBERALS, STILL ARGUING OVER THE NEED TO HOLD A HIGH LEVEL PARTY CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS, GAINED ANOTHER POSSIBLE PRE-CANDIDATE IN SENATOR CARLOS HOLMES TRUJILLO, WHOSE SUPPORTERS INDICATED THEY WOULD PUT HIM FORWARD AS A CANDIDATE. THIS IS VIEWED BY SOME OBSERVERS AS A LOCAL POLITICIAN POWER PLAY IN EL VALLE DEPARTMENT WHERE HOLMES HAS A POWERFUL ORGANIZATION, AND WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT LIBERAL PARTY BASTION. COMMENT: MOST OBSERVERS TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT BETANCUR WILL EVENTUALLY ANNOUNCE HIS CANDIDACY AND DESCRIBE HIS RELUCTANCE AS A DELAYING TACTIC UNTIL HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF BOTH WINGS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

4. LOCAL PRESS COMMENTS ON POTENTIAL U.S. ENVOY. LOCAL PRESS SPECULATION AND EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE NEXT U.S. AMBASSADOR TO COLOMBIA HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND DIVERSE. OPPOSING VIEWS ON THE GOC'S REPORTEDLY (N.Y. TIMES JUNE 13) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE NOMINATION OF JOSE CABRANES AS U.S. AMBASSADOR HAVE EMERGED IN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S TWO LEADING DAILIES. THE ANTI-ADMINISTRATION OSPINA-PASTRANA WING IN ITS "LA REPUBLICA", CHARGES THE GOVERNMENT WITH "INGENUOUS RACISM" FOR SUPPOSEDLY DISAPPROVING OF CABRANES, A MAN OF "THE HIGHEST PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES," BECAUSE OF HIS LATIN ORIGIN. THE CONSERVATIVE ALVARISTAS IN "EL SIGLO," HOWEVER, AGREED WITH THE GOC'S REPORTEDLY UNFAVORABLE REACTION, DECLARING WITH WOUNDED PRIDE THAT "WE ARE NOT A SCHOOL FOR AMATEUR AMBASSADORS. NEITHER ARE WE A LABORATORY FOR RACIAL MINORITIES. WE ARE COLOMBIA." THE LIBERAL PARTY PRESS WAS MORE RESTRAINED. A PRO-ADMINISTRATION "EL TIEMPO" EDITORIAL IMPLIED ITS PREFERENCE FOR A NON-LATIN NOMINEE AND ADDED "THE POSSIBLE NEW DIPLOMAT MR. DEVINE BRINGS US BACK TO THE GOOD OLD TIMES", WHILE "EL ESPECTADOR" LIMITED ITSELF TO WIRE SERVICE REPORTS AND REHASHING OF THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE CABRANES NOMINATION AND SPECULATION REGARDING POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS, WHICH WERE ALSO CARRIED

PROMINENTLY BY THE OTHER LEADING DAILIES.

5. PUBLIC ORDER. A MODERATE AMOUNT OF POLITICALLY-INSPIRED VIOLENCE OCCURRED AROUND THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE KIDNAPPING OF A WEALTHY RANCHER IN ANTIOQUIA AND A FARC ATTACK IN CAUCA IN WHICH ONE PEASANT, AN ACCUSED ARMY COLLABORATOR, WAS KILLED AND FOUR OTHER PEASANTS WERE ABDUCTED. IN BOGOTA, THE BOMBING OF A POLICE CLINIC AND MILITARY RESERVISTS'S ASSOCIATION BUILDING BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS (POSSIBLY FARC) LEFT ONE MAN INJURED. TWO OTHER TERRORISTS RECEIVED SIXTEEN-MONTH PRISON SENTENCES FROM A MILITARY COURT FOR THE ATTEMPTED FIRE-BOMBING OF A SEARS STORE LAST DECEMBER. STUDENT VIOLENCE LED TO THE TEMPORARY CLOSING OF TWO UNIVERSITIES IN MEDELLIN, WHERE A STUDENT DEMONSTRATOR WAS KILLED LAST WEEK, AND ONE SCHOOL IN MANIZALES, WHILE IN BOGOTA, SIX DEANS FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RESIGNED TO PROTEST THE UNIVERSITY'S PLANS FOR DEALING WITH DISORDERS THERE.

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